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# ETHICAL TEACHING OF FROEBEL

MARY J. LYSCHINSKA  
THERESE G. MONTEFIORE



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THE  
ETHICAL TEACHING  
OF FROEBEL

AS GATHERED FROM HIS WORKS







THE  
ETHICAL TEACHING  
OF FROEBEL

AS GATHERED FROM HIS WORKS

*TWO ESSAYS*

- I. BY MARY J. LYSCHINSKA  
II. BY THERESE G. MONTEFIORE

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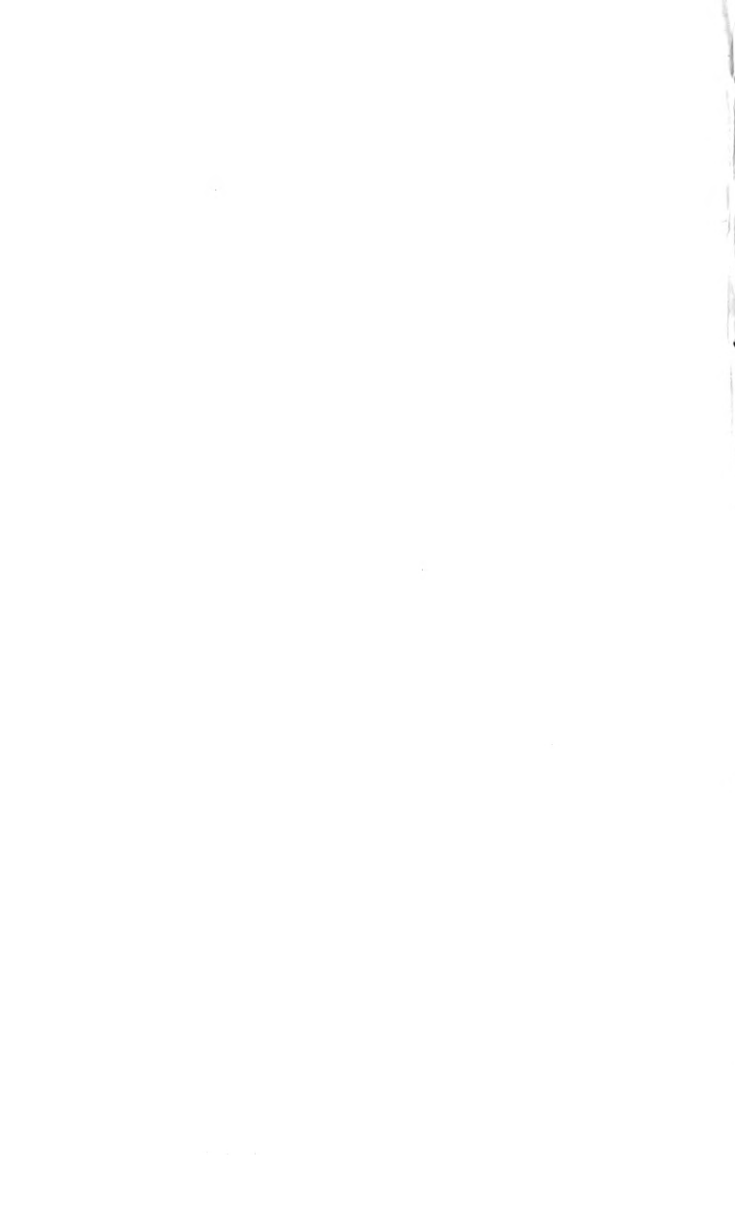


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## PREFATORY NOTE.



IN the year 1887 the Froebel Society offered a prize for the best essay upon the subject of "Froebel's Ethical Teaching, as gathered from his works." The usual method of mottoes was adopted. The judges (the Rev. R. H. Quick, Professor Meiklejohn, and Miss Snell) divided the prize between two essays, which were printed in the *Journal of Education* during 1888, and by the kind permission of its editor are now republished in this separate form. The first essay



is the work of Miss M. J. Lyschinska, Superintendent of Method in Infant Schools, under the London School Board ; the second was written by the late Mrs. Claude G. Montefiore. It is hoped that the two together may present a fairly complete account of the subject with which they deal.

To the friends of its authoress the second essay may also possess a peculiar interest as the first and the last literary fruits of a finely touched spirit, whom death has taken from them in the spring-time of her years. Yet though her exposition of Froebel's ethics shows here and there the traces of a beginner in literary work, it was no immature personality, of whom



the memory, to those who knew her well, remains behind. Of her it might well be said, “τελειωθεῖσα ἐν ὀλίγῳ ἐπλήρωσε χρόνους μακροῦς. She, being perfected in a short time, fulfilled a long time.”

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*The proceeds from the sale of this book  
will go to the Froebel Society.*







THE  
ETHICAL TEACHING  
OF FROEBEL,  
AS GATHERED FROM HIS WORKS.

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I.

BY MARY J. LYSCHINSKA.

B







### *Introductory.*

FRIEDRICH FROEBEL was primarily a reformer in a field of action, not in a domain of thought; we must not, therefore, look to his writings for a scientifically built up system of ethical theory in which the relation of parts to whole is mapped out with logical precision. To expect this is to mistake the nature of his work. On the other hand, all men of strong, consistent action will be found to have a few convictions of ethical significance. They will hold a philosophy of life, of wide or narrow range, as circumstances



permit ; but they will hold it firmly as an energizing principle, as the secret of their power. Considering the striking deductions Froebel made from his views concerning man's nature and his relations to the universe ; considering that as a teacher and educator, the growth of character was the object of his constant observation and reflection ; is it possible to say that Froebel taught no ethical theory ? Is it not rather a matter of interest to show that the practical measures he advocated have deeper reasons than those of expediency ; that they lie in his views concerning the constitution of man and his relations to the world and to his Maker ? Nothing less than this foundation could have enabled



a man to advocate measures and carry them out when they were very unfashionable ; nothing less could have enabled a man to treat with complete—perhaps not at all times justifiable—indifference the prizes in life which influence ordinary men.

We may, or we may not, agree with Froebel's ethical views ; but only when we have taken some pains to master them, have we learnt to understand the measure he himself put to his own work.

Froebel's ethical teaching is of great importance at the present time because there is a general concurrence observable between the conclusions of scientific thought, enlightened common sense, and Froebel's practice in the field of education. On the one



hand, enlightened common sense revolts against the tyranny of a scholastic age with its baneful legacy of abstractions distasteful to youth and ludicrously out of harmony with some of the conditions of modern life. Natural science has in its own language preached a solemn sermon on the same theme: Man is of the earth earthy; at his peril let him disdain the concrete environment to which he owes the fashion of his being; in doing this he will be levelled in the dust. Then we have Frederick Froebel, a religious man, calmly adopting in 1826 the conception of evolution as a revelation of the deity, and applying it—as Pestalozzi did before him—to a body of facts very different from those of physical



science. One cannot but be struck with the firm hold these two men had upon evolution as the key to the facts of earliest infancy. The microscopic gaze which Froebel turned upon the dawnings of individual mind is in harmony with his own wider outlook upon the world of living men, of history, and of nature. These were to him but parts of one vast whole; to be understood in any part they must be seized in their reciprocal relations and with inevitable reference to the great goal of all things. A very strongly marked characteristic of Froebel's mental activity was a craving to bring isolated things, facts, into some general relation. This seems to have been a strongly



marked feature of his moral, as of his intellectual, nature. At a very early age he derived a sense of *peace* from the sudden revelation of a fitness in things in nature,\* while he suffered intense moral anguish from an unmotherly mother. In youth he was intellectually rebellious against much of the University teaching, because facts were presented in such a way that they had no meaning, no more organic relation between them than between the atoms of dust on the king's highway.

This characteristic search for some principle uniting phenomena has sometimes led admirers of Froebel's life and character to place him in the category of philosophers, as if his

\* Vol. i. pp. 39, 40.



creative power lay in the domain of philosophic thought. A closer acquaintance with German life and intellectual habit will doubtless correct this insular view. It must be remembered that in the land of philosophic systems, the *dialect* of the schools is the current coin of educated society to a much greater extent than in England. Froebel, no doubt, has insensibly taken the hue and tinge of a prevailing school of thought, perhaps to the detriment of his true message. It may, however, be maintained that the temper of mind which seeks unity in diversity is not peculiar to the philosopher; it may be a craving of the emotional and the moral nature. The man who seeks to bind together



the disjointed fragments of thought or of life into a living whole, has the poet-soul; he has a vision of the meaning of some small section of this tangled web of life through which we ordinary mortals are stumbling blindfold.

This sensitiveness to the *relations* of facts, moral and intellectual; this strong search to establish *harmonies of relation* as a principle to be kept in view in the field of education, was impressed upon everything Froebel ever did, or said. He symbolizes this great truth in "Mutter- und Koselieder":—"*Treib' mit deinem Kinde Nichts beziehungslos, sonst wird es dadurch leicht erziehungslos.*"\* Of

\* "Mutter- und Koselieder," plate 17; and p. 144.



the vast bearings of this principle on the art of education and instruction it is not here the place to speak, but one day it may appear to be the very pith and marrow of "the new education." The nature of man, his relations to his kind, to the universe and to God, these are the themes touched upon by Froebel in his longest educational essay, of which his shorter essays are variations and repetitions. In stating the sources of information from which these outlines of ethical teaching are drawn, Dr. Wichard Lange's edition of Froebel's educational works published in 1862-3, and Seidel's edition of "Mutter- und Koselieder," published in 1883, will be referred to.



I. *Froebel's first Postulate in Education, a standard of Perfection, an Ideal.*

Had Froebel lived in the present day, he would certainly not have understood the position of the man who on *principle* maintains a vaunted neutrality of heart, and who intellectually evades the highest questions concerning man's being as the best means of throwing light upon our sublunary affairs. The opening paragraphs of "The Education of Man" \* read like a solemn confession of faith. Froebel does not hold an opinion about the existence of God, but rather the idea possesses him of an

\* See also Vol. i. p. 265 ; vol. ii. p. 1.



underlying unity\* of relation between the self-conscious spirit of man, of nature, and an all-sustaining, self-conscious personal Being. He conceives God as acting at every moment in and through all things, yet as beyond and distinct from† all that is created, visible and invisible. The domain of law and order is co-extensive with the presence of God, and there is in his mind no antithesis between the existence of law and of God's being. On the creative power of God, Froebel seems to dwell with reverential delight. It is evident that Froebel considers the supreme Being to be apprehensible by human faculties, and the strongest evidences

\* Vol. ii. pp. 1, 3, 4, 108.

† Vol. ii. p. 110.



of this, he finds in man himself. Of the adult who puts his hand to the work of education *in any form*, he demands that he shall have made at least some serious attempt to formulate in thought and life his convictions on this high theme and its immediate issues. To him it was the pivot upon which all education turned,\* without which he dared not confront the trustfulness of childhood.

## II. *Of Man as the Object of Education.*

1. Froebel conceived man to be the offspring of God; hence man partakes of the divine nature, and God dwells in each man.†

\* Vol. i. p. 265; vol. ii. p. 107.

† Vol. ii. pp. 2, 5, 6.



2. The divine nature in man is an undeveloped possibility in him; it must be called forth; it is made manifest only under the conditions of all development by a series of steps analogous to the process of growth in the mind and body generally.\*

3. Froebel conceived this process of development—from a state of unconscious, instinctive life to a state of self-conscious freedom of determination towards God—to be subject to laws.† To discover these laws was—according to him—the science of education;‡ the help which the adult gives to a child, in obedience

\* Vol. ii. pp. 2, 3.

† Vol. i. pp. 285, 289, 298; vol. ii. p. 2, par. 2 and 3; p. 28, par. 24.

‡ Vol. ii. p. 2.



to these laws, is at once the art of education\* and the highest wisdom† attainable on earth.

4. Body and mind being indissolubly united during life, man may not put asunder what God has joined together. Hence the instinctive movements of infancy must be viewed as having a mental background, and through physical channels we can permanently affect mental life.‡

5. Froebel rejects the dualistic theory of man's nature which seeks to explain the facts of sin, of repentance, of struggle by the existence of good and evil principles

\* Vol. ii. p. 2, par. 3.

† Vol. ii. p. 3, par. 4.

‡ The whole of "Mutter- und Koselieder," Vol. ii. p. 29, par. 27 ; p. 35, par. 31 ; p. 385.



warring for possession of man's soul. He sees in man the meeting-place of two realms, that of nature and that of self-conscious spirit. The law of nature is the law of egotism, the law of man's spirit is the law of love. *Both these realms\* are manifestations of God; they are not essentially antagonistic.* The conflict which arises between the two in human life is due to the ignorance, the weakness and the freedom of man; he produces chaos where he ought to have established and upheld harmony. To establish this order, first in his own person, secondly to promote the same in human affairs according to his measure of insight, is his task on earth. In the nursery we lay the

\* Vol. ii. p. 5, par. 8; pp. 13, 14, par. 17.



foundation of that balance between the sensuous and the spiritual part of man's nature. Froebel practically lays much more stress in early education upon the exercise of the nobler motives in human nature,\* whereby the lower elements are regulated and in due time transfigured. He never for a moment, however, ignores the deep-seated egotism of the young ;† he looks upon it as an indispensable force,—*in itself* neither good nor evil, —a force which, in education, must be provided for, reckoned with, legitimately satisfied and blended with other forces, and thus gradually metamorphosed into a very different product. Nor can Froebel be justly

\* Vol. ii. p. 5, par. 8 ; p. 16, par. 20.

† Vol. ii. p. 16, par. 20.



reproached with anything approaching to insensibility to the grievousness of sin, when he takes away the idea of an arbitrary penalty with regard to offences. His general view on this question may perhaps be best gathered from the following passage:— \*

. . . “spiritual forces when manifested in man, exhibit a sequence, a succession of steps. It follows, therefore, that when a man at one period of his life has omitted to put forth his strength in a work which he knows to be in harmony with the divine order of things, there comes a time, sooner or later, when a void will be perceived; when the fruits of his omitted action ought to have ap-

\* Vol. ii. p. 24.



peared, and do not: they are the missing links in the chain of consequences. The measure of that void is the measure of his past inaction, and that man will never quite reach the same level of attainment that he might have touched, had he divinely energized his lost moments. . . . It remains for him to put forth that second resource of spiritual strength—patient endurance of the consequences: this in its turn becomes a solvent of present difficulties; he will by his redoubled energy avoid the recurrence of loss in the future."

*Of Man's religious and moral Nature.*

6. From Froebel's elevated view of man's origin and of the latent possibilities within him, it may be almost



inferred that he acknowledges the supreme obligation laid upon him by his own nature, to be in his measure perfect, even as God is perfect.\* He finds this aim attained once in history, in the person of Jesus.† In Him he sees the revealer of a new relation between God and man.‡

7. As Froebel sees in man's nature the faculties which make the apprehension of the divine possible to him,§ he thinks religious education cannot begin too early; by postponing it until the rational man appears, we cramp and dwarf the religious faculties, and "when later,

\* Vol. ii. p. 341.

† Vol. i. p. 265 ; vol. ii. p. 3.

‡ Vol. ii. pp. 102-105.

§ Vol. ii. pp. 99, 198.



direct religious instruction begins, it is barren and empty of all content." \* On the other hand, he considers the creeds and catechisms of churches,—moulds into which has run the highly elaborated religious consciousness of grown men,—to be injurious, when foisted upon the delicate religious consciousness of the young. All texts, hymns, etc., committed to memory must be the outcome of an inner experience of the child, must be in close harmony with his life. All religious *instruction* presupposes a *life* in religion,† and all religious life has its rise in the nature and strength of those spiritual ties which bind parents and children as the

\* Vol. ii. pp. 192, 193.

† Vol. ii. pp. 198, 199.



physical bonds are slackened day by day. "God is to be our father, and yet we are far from being fathers to our own children. We presume to have insight into divine things, and yet we neglect as unworthy of notice those human relations which are a key to the divine."\* Here we see how the conception of an evolution in religious life guided Froebel's genius ; with what delicacy he traces some outlines of a child's religion in "Mutter- und Koselieder."† How unlike is its *expression*, how identical is it in *essence* with that of adult life !

8. All moral life, according to Froebel, ultimately rests upon the free exercise of the will in favour of

\* Vol. ii. p. 103.

† Vol. ii. plates 21, 22, 48.



the good, irrespective \* of consequences. Hence there is great danger of weakening the inner man by excessive ruling and prescribing.† The grown-up person stands before the child as before a partially revealed entity upon whom he has no right to force ill-considered commands, not in harmony with the laws of the child's nature.‡ To do this wilfully is to commit sin. Parents and teachers must frequently maintain a *passive* attitude§ in education and instruction, remembering that above both parents and children there is a higher will before whom they are *all* as children and as learners.

\* Vol. ii. pp. 193, 194, 196. † Vol. ii. p. 6.

‡ Vol. ii. p. 6. § Vol. ii. pp. 5, 7, 8, 10.



*Human Labour : its higher meaning  
in the Life of Man.*

9. Froebel was deeply imbued with the conception of the creative power of God. This ever-present fact lent a dignity even to the meanest human labour.

“God is an unceasingly creative energy ; every thought of God is a deed, a creation unto all eternity. . . . God created man in His own image . . . hence [in a sense] man is endowed with creative power. . . . This is the deeper meaning . . . of all work\* . . . We have an altogether wrong and degrading notion about work and its meaning for the true life of man. . . . We do not work to get a

\* Vol. ii. pp. 22, 23.



living, but because it is the appointed means whereby alone we can develop the divine possibilities within us. . . . Food, clothing, shelter are merely accessories which come to us in the nature of things, in order to enable us to continue our work. . . . Children are much nearer the inner truth of things than we are, for when their instincts are not perverted by the superfine wisdom of their elders, they give themselves up to a full, vigorous activity. . . . Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." \*

Froebel considered that the first beginnings of constructive, productive, creative activity are seen in a little child's play.

"Play at this age is the highest,

\* Vol. ii. p. 23.



most spiritual act of which his nature, human nature, is capable. In it we see the whole future life of the man epitomized ; the secret recesses of dawning mind are therein revealed to us as in a mirror. Healthy, unforced play results in an intensified pleasure in existence for the child ; he is then at peace with himself and all the world. In it lies the germ of all human goodness ; it is the growing-point out of which all true service in after-life springs. A little child that sets about his play quietly, plays continuously, and becomes absorbed in it. A little being that can play until physical nature is exhausted has to my mind the promise of a generous, disinterested manhood in him. Is there a lovelier sight at



this period of life than a child absorbed in his play,—who has fallen asleep whilst playing? Play is no mere beneficent provision of nature for killing time in the present, but a phenomenon of the highest psychological interest, having important purposes to fulfil. Cherish it, mothers ; protect it from disturbance, ye fathers. . . . Play at this age is as the cotyledons to the future tree. The whole plan or disposition of the future being is revealed in its most delicate lineaments in a child's playful activity. . . . Whether the future life shall be pure or sullied, peaceful or rent with passion, industrious or indolent ; whether it shall be a kind of dull vegetative existence, or a life full of high, conscious purpose ; a life



at peace, or at war with society ; all these questions are raised, and in part determined, by the nature of and the conditions under which a child plays. . . . Here we have in embryonic knot, close together, all the varied relations in which he afterwards stands to family, to kith and kin, to mankind and to his God. Unravel this vital knot in conscious obedience to the laws of its nature and you have influenced all these ramifications of the life of his manhood. In play these relations are revealed in nascent simplicity and in the unity of unconscious life ; at this period the child knows not how to distinguish the pretty flowers from his pleasure in them ; the joy of tumbling them into his mother's lap



from the dim feeling of joy in the Giver of all beauty. Who can lay the dissecting-knife on the pleasures of these early years?"\*

In another place Froebel says of play:—"Play is delicious for its own sake, not from any result which may arise from it; it is absolutely unconscious of purpose."† Froebel saw in this phenomenon of play a double meaning; he saw the germ of work in the fact, and he provided the right kind of material upon which a little child might exercise his creative productive energy under direction. Froebel, with his gospel of work, stands out as the great "leveller-up" of all men; he effectually obliterates the class distinctions of modern

\* Vol. ii. pp. 33, 34. † Vol. ii. p. 30.



society between the educated and the non-educated, between rich and poor, between those who have and those who have not, and that in the only safe way. His finger is upon the plague-spot of modern industrial life, with its idolatry of unlimited competition. It is possible that industrial England may have yet to learn the full significance of the ethical teaching of this great educational genius with respect to labour. Its psychological, its moral aspects may yet have to be studied in the nursery and in the school, before some of the social and industrial problems confronting us to-day can be successfully solved. With Froebel, this question of the right training of the creative constructive activity from its



earliest beginnings was akin to religion—it was, in fact, only another side of religious training. “Important as the first religious training is,” he says, “early training to industry is every whit as momentous. . . . Religion without industry is in danger of becoming an idle dream ; toil without religious aspiration condemns man to be a beast of burden.” \*

*Of Man's social Relations, his Training to social Duties.*

Another apparent parallelism between scientific thought and Froebelian education is the strong accentuation of social ties. The more we see the forms of civil life unfolded in all

\* Vol. ii. p. 25.



their complexity, the more we realize the fact that "no man liveth to himself alone." Under the teaching of scientific method we are becoming increasingly aware of the close interaction between the various sections of human activity, as of a great living organism, and we are in danger of drawing from these conceptions of social relations alone a whole theory of morality, a complete standard of right and wrong, overlooking and overshadowing the equally great facts of individual consciousness, of individual responsibility, and spontaneous exercise of the matured will. What are Froebel's own principles of action with respect to these two great sides of human obligation, and what is his attitude towards them in edu-



cation? Here again we have but to turn to his volume of "The Education of Man" and to "Mutter- und Koselieder" for an answer. I will summarize in a few sentences the burden of his teaching spread over many pages.

10. According to Froebel, each man born into the world has an impress peculiar to himself,\* constituting his individuality. This may be modified and developed by education, but never essentially changed. To cherish this individual impress within limits is to cherish the divine thought in each man. The stages of individual development are analogous to those of society viewed generally, † only they are epitomized and

\* Vol. ii. pp. 6, 13, 14, 100. † Vol. ii. p. 27.



more rapidly passed through in the individual. A child is a perpetually changing, growing, yet potentially complete human being. Stages of life such as infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, etc., must not be so severed as to become unrelated ; on the other hand, each of these periods has an inflorescence, a culminating point of relative completeness and beauty of its own.\* The more *fully* each stage is lived through, the stronger will each succeeding period of life be.

II. On the other hand, every individual is born into a social group having reciprocal relations of narrower and wider range with all other members of the social body.† He

\* Vol. ii. pp. 20-22.

† Vol. i. pp. 274, 275 ; vol. ii. p. 12.



likewise stands in immediate relations to the past, the present, and the future of his race. Froebel considered this double-sided truth of the training of the individuality in man and the training to social responsibilities as having an immediate bearing upon character, from earliest infancy. How he put into the hands of mothers and of all women who have the care of young children the ends of these gossamer threads upon which hang the issues of life, his "Mutter- und Koselieder" \* shows. Nor are these two sides of human obligation necessarily antagonistic, if clearly, *consciously* raised to principles of education, dominating the field of practice. The method of science may

\* Plates 12, 14, 17, 18, 32.



be rapidly disclosing the complex machinery of modern society, whether social groups be viewed on the microscopic or on the macroscopic scale ; the conditions of healthy social growth, of social disease and decay, will be laid bare by the keen instrument of scientific analysis. Frederick Froebel with his "new education" would have welcomed such knowledge as it becomes diffused amongst all modern communities, for it will only serve to lay bare the firm foundations in human personalities upon which his educational practice rests. The strengthening of the growing will, the heightening of individual capacity by laying hold in education of the productive power in man, the preservation of the ideal purposes of child-



hood throughout all classes of society, these are recuperative forces which no *complete* science of society can possibly ignore.

### III. *Of Nature as a Symbol and Revelation of God to Man.*

It is remarkable that Froebel practically should have borne his testimony to the analogies between the natural and psychical order of facts at a time when such comparisons must have been considered as mere ornaments of speech. That he derived them from an habitual perusal of some passages of the gospels there is good reason to infer, and it is well remembered by those who knew him what a fascination the white lily had



for him, how late in life he assured those around him that a tree had been his great teacher. That his studies in at least one branch of natural science must have been of no mean order is evidenced by the fact that he held an honourable post in the University of Berlin, and was offered another in Sweden. But the bent of his mind was not that of a discoverer in the domain of physical law ; these were only disciplinary studies which were afterwards to bear fruit in the totally different sphere of the psychology of infancy and childhood. Froebel uses the term "nature" in the sense of the great visible and invisible organism outside man's self-conscious spirit, underlying the consciousness of individuals, entering



into, supporting and conditioning that life without possibility of identification of the two as one. Nature is therefore to him that vast substratum\* on which the still greater world of conscious mind is superposed. Nature and man's spirit are alike from God. He sees an intimate and ceaseless interchange of activities subsisting between nature and man's spirit, and he takes this intercourse to be an indispensable agency whereby his education is advanced.† Nature and the highest faculties of the human mind can never contradict each other, seeing that they are distinctly co-related.‡ But what is there in the facts of animal and plant life,

\* Vol. ii. p. 3, par. 5.

† Vol. ii. p. 54, par. 40.   ‡ Vol. ii. p. 108.



in the movement and balance of those mighty forces determining our day and night, our summer and winter; hedging in our little cycle of years as by a framework; what is there in all this for the young? Is it possible that the tiniest child can be moulded in character, disciplined in intellect by any one of these experiences? Nature is a revelation of God's being to Froebel, and a revelation of such vast extent, of such immediate practical and ideal importance, that to exclude the experience from a growing child is to cripple him morally and intellectually for life. And long before scientific demarcation has begun, there is in the child, (when not stunted by the artificial conditions of city life in



its degradation,) that intuitive life in sympathy with the common sights and sounds of nature, which is imprinted upon his very being. A child's pleasure in his cat on the hearthrug, in the sighing wind, in the sparrow on the housetop, or in the sunlight caught and reflected by the mirror on the wall,—this is an unerring instinct which may be safely followed in dealing with our children, while most of our scientific text-books are leading us pedagogically astray. True, a child does not enjoy a landscape, he has no faculty to appreciate the vast aggregate of harmonies of colour, form, and sound in which an educated adult may revel. But the rudiments of such refined enjoyment are implanted in the young, and we



must learn to recognize them in their faintest beginnings, and to stimulate them where the environment is highly adverse to their growth. It is because the human mind, normally constituted, finds its co-relatives in the sequences of natural phenomena, that they are of such great importance as a discipline. That there is no necessary antagonism between a direct knowledge of natural facts and a knowledge of literature, we may infer by observing what an influence the familiarity with natural facts has upon language, and how a national habit of observing nature may tinge the literature of a whole people. The effects of direct contact with natural facts upon speech and language generally, was long ago pointed out by



Edward Denison, when writing from the East-end of London. In 1868, he says :—

“My wits are getting blunted by the monotony and ugliness of this place. I can almost imagine—difficult as it is—the awful effect upon a human mind of never seeing anything but the meanest and vilest of men and man’s works, and of complete exclusion from God’s works,—a position in which the villager never is, and freedom from which ought to give him a higher moral starting-point than the Gibeonite of a large town. I am not sure that it does, but we would think it must, when *we know how deeply the thought and language of the wildest savages are impressed by the majesty of external nature.*”



In these days, when a great advance has been made along many lines at once, in the work of humanizing vast city populations, it is perhaps right to quote word for word a pioneer whom death has silenced. He, indeed, saw that direct contact with, and an observant eye for, natural phenomena gave depth and richness to human speech, because it powerfully affected human thought and feeling. Froebel viewed the processes of growth in the natural world as symbolical of the processes of development in the mental and moral spheres. His own studies in the physical and mathematical sciences had given him the key to his educational work. In this work, he only followed the greatest Teacher of man-



kind, who, in parables, clearly drew parallels between two great revelations of the divine, between facts of plant and animal life and spiritual life. Is it not extraordinary then, that we are to-day still hesitating whether the flood of light which the natural sciences have thrown upon our century be not after all a teaching of the devil? Let us cast this unworthy fear behind us and begin with Froebel at the bottom rung of the ladder, with a trustful study of the normal, healthy instincts of childhood.



THE  
ETHICAL TEACHING  
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II.

BY THERESE G. MONTEFIORE.







THE expositor of Froebel's ethical teaching is confronted with an initial difficulty in the peculiar fusion in Froebel of ethics and religion. His ethical teaching is scarcely ever clearly separable from his religious doctrine. In fact, the very idea of such a separation would be foreign to his thought. To his mind man is presented as a revelation of the divine, and man's end and calling as the conscious manifestation and development of the divine element within him. He is so strongly impressed with the unity of all things,



and with our own ultimate unity in God, that his teaching is throughout coloured by this religious conviction. "Man should be active, industrious, and creative," he tells us ; not, as the moralist might have said, because such is his duty, or, again, because such will be ultimately for his happiness, but because "God is creative."

Other and minor difficulties rise before us in the fact that his writings do not consist of philosophical treatises, but of works on education, in which remarks on physical, intellectual, moral and religious subjects are mingled together hap-hazard. Moreover, that not only in the "*Mutter- und Koselieder*," but also in the "*Menschen-Erziehung*," he is concerned mainly, if not entirely, with



quite young children and children of school age, constitutes a serious drawback. Finally, we are continually being reminded that he was emphatically a worker and not a writer, and that he took but little pains to give his writings either scientific accuracy or literary form. That there are great and noble thoughts on ethics scattered through his works, no one who has toiled through the diffuse and difficult German will for a moment deny, but they have to be sought for as jewels in a cave. Notwithstanding the beauty of isolated passages, we cannot in any strict sense speak of Froebel's system of ethics. He has developed no such system, and it is an almost hopeless task to try and piece together, from the scattered



expressions of his ethical thought, any organized whole. Still, this does not necessarily make his work the less valuable. There is no lack in the world of systems of ethics, carefully worked out by distinguished philosophers. What Froebel gives us is less common—the spontaneous thought of an exquisitely pure and sympathetic mind, unbiased by study of ethical systems, and unfettered by the necessity of elaborating a scientifically consistent whole. His religion is the religion of the much-appealed-to “common man,” absolutely simple, unspeculative, substantial, untouched alike by deep philosophic reasoning or by crude scepticism and denial. It has its roots deep down in the absolute simplicity and straightfor-



wardness of the man, and in its child-like directness is for us to-day, when the religious education of children becomes daily more and more perplexing and difficult, of singular value and suggestiveness.

To attach a philosophic label to Froebel's ethical teaching would be misleading, because of philosophy in any technical sense he was entirely innocent. But, although he cannot, for this sufficient reason, be classed as a follower of any of the schools, he was, however unconsciously, an ethical idealist of the deepest dye. That he was so is partly due to the fact that he took words as he found them, with their accepted meanings. He never attempted to bring such apparently different conceptions as



good and pleasant under a single term. He never dreamt that the will was not free, or that duty was but the product of custom and social convention. In saying this, we do not mean to imply that in such a limitation he was either right or wrong. We are merely stating a fact. But his unquestioning acceptance of the common signification of the ordinary ethical vocabulary does not explain and account for the whole body of ethical doctrine which may be gathered from his works. His teaching is throughout illumined by his own genius. Ordinary ethics—the moral ideas of the ordinary man—are certainly rather idealistic than utilitarian. But Froebel's ethic is idealism in its most perfect purity.



Goodness for its own sake, and as its own reward—that is his ideal. And intimately, nay inseparably, connected as his ethics and religion undoubtedly are, it is yet of the last importance to note that his religion never robs his ethics of their singleness and purity. Heteronomy in ethics, whatever its source, would be as emphatically repudiated by Froebel as by Kant. The purity of his ethical motive is never stained by any promise of speedy pleasure upon earth or of deferred payment in heaven.

Froebel's ethical doctrine is throughout rather practical than speculative. The great underlying principle which meets us in one form or another through all his teaching is the principle of human activity. This he



regards as of the deepest ethical significance, and, as we have seen, takes care to base it on religious grounds. Over and over again he seeks to impress us with its high value. To quote his own words\* :—

“The delusive idea that men merely toil and work for the sake of preserving their bodies, and procuring for themselves bread, houses and clothes, is degrading and not to be encouraged. No! the true origin of man’s activity and creativeness lies in his unceasing impulse to embody outside himself the divine and spiritual element within him.”

A page or two further on, he adds :—

\* “*Menschen-Erziehung*” (Ed. Seidel, Vienna, 1887), p. 23.



“Just as important as early training in religion, is early training in activity and industry. . . . For religion without work is apt to degenerate into empty dreaming and purposeless emotion, while, on the other hand, work without religion tends to degrade man into a machine. . . . Work and religion are coeval—as God, the Eternal, creates throughout all eternity.”

Each man's calling upon earth is to work ; first, because God works—and man must endeavour to be as like God as he can ; but also, secondly, because it is through work that each man takes his part as a member of the social whole. The child must be led to observe all the multitudinous activities that serve to provide him



with the bread he eats, the clothes he wears and the house that shelters him, and by this means will the impulse be awakened in him to take his own share in the world's work around him. Froebel strongly insists that children should be encouraged to help their parents in their daily occupations. The imitative desire, which first urges them to such action, is to be fostered and developed into ethical impulse. On no account are they to be refused or repelled when they offer their help. They are to be encouraged in "free activity according to inward impulse." All external authority must work gently, and almost imperceptibly. No outer force should rudely thrust itself (*hineingreifen*) into the inner working of the



child-mind, and so destroy its free development.

Another great principle, at once psychological and ethical, to which Froebel attaches supreme importance, is that of freedom. He recurs to it repeatedly, and always with fresh vigour. We shall, however, be better able to understand his views upon it, if we first briefly consider his attitude on the much-vexed question of the original goodness or depravity of man. Upon no other subject is he more in earnest. "All men are in themselves good," he exclaims (*"Mensch.-Erzieh.,"* p. 74); "it is we who make them bad, either by mistaken training or by absolute neglect." Man's faults arise on the one hand, from complete ignoring of certain sides of



his nature, and on the other, from the wrong development or actual perversion of originally good tendencies. It is true man *can* be bad, but this is a necessary condition of his being good, just as that he *can* make himself a slave is a necessary condition of his being truly free. Every appearance of wickedness is due to originally good impulses either misdirected or crushed. Holding this view so strongly, it is no wonder that Froebel should insist with such constant iteration on the necessity for freedom in moral development. If every impulse is naturally good, then clearly all we have to do is to let it develop itself as freely as possible, only taking care to guard it from thwarting or misdirection. This doc-



trine, which, it must be confessed, is open to considerable doubt, is nevertheless the basis of much of Froebel's ethical creed, and more especially of his teaching in regard to freedom.

The other side of the question does not seem to present itself to him with any force. Discipline (*Zucht*) and obedience (*Gehorsamkeit*) are words that occur but seldom in his writings. He probably held that, if children were educated, as he would have them, not each by himself alone, but all in relation with one another, as members of a social whole, such discipline as is necessary would come of itself by force of the natural interaction of social approbation and displeasure; and that a child who tends to act wilfully or selfishly would be moulded



into unselfishness and self-control partly by being himself shunned for his faults, and partly by seeing the opposite virtues in others loved and admired by his fellows. There is, no doubt, a great deal of truth in this view. Still, it is open to question whether a certain amount of direct discipline, and the direct inculcation of a habit of obedience are not also both necessary and valuable. It is true that, in discussing drill (*Mensch.-Erzieh.*, p. 177), he does allude to its value as discipline (*Zucht*), which, however, he goes on to define as follows :—

“Discipline means leading the child back firmly and earnestly in all his doings to that native human dignity which has been outwardly put before



him, and which he has inwardly realized,—and to that highest reverence for man which follows upon it ; in other words, causing that very reverence to shine forth expressively in all his action.”

We here certainly have indicated to us how to encourage a due sense of man's worth and dignity, but it is not what we generally understand by discipline. Ready submission to another's will, instant obedience to command, habitual self-control — qualities usually understood as implied in discipline—are wholly ignored by Froebel. In his extreme desire to secure freedom and free development, he has, perhaps necessarily, overlooked them. A character trained strictly according to his directions



would hardly regard obedience as a virtue. But Froebel might reply that his ideal character would be in itself so far perfect that it would do what is right naturally and without need of external authority ; having all its powers of affection fully developed, it would do for love all and more than all that another would do for obedience. Yet, granting the cogency of this defence, we cannot help feeling that Froebel's teaching is here inadequate. He strongly insists, and with justice, that there should be no caprice or wilfulness in the attitude of the parent or teacher towards the child. But to maintain that a child should not do anything simply because he is ordered by some one above him, but only because it is right, is subversive of



all authority. In his eagerness for freedom, Froebel is blind to this danger. Necessity, he says, "must call forth freedom and law, self-determination; otherwise education is only injurious." To this end all prescriptive commands must be clearly recognized as simple consequences of eternal law, to which he who commands and he who is commanded are alike subject:—"Between the two, teacher and pupil, there must be always a third—the good, the right—to which both must bow—an inevitable eternal necessity, banishing all suspicion of caprice." The teacher's commands must come to the child, not as expressions of his own will, but as expressions of an absolute right, of which the teacher himself



is simply an interpreter and to whose guidance he has given himself up "in utter self-abandonment and devotion."

We see here with what deep reverence Froebel regards this abstract right, and it is clear that his method would tend greatly to impress the child with a sense of its dignity. It would create in him at once an awe of, and a habit of submission to, an invisible power, with which, as he grew older, he would learn to feel himself in conscious and willing unison. Upon all these points, however, Froebel gives us only here and there hints and indications of his meaning. It is in the "*Menschen-Erziehung*" (p. 11) that he first speaks of this great principle of right, and he occasionally refers to it again in



a cursory way. But nowhere does he fully elaborate and explain a principle upon which, notwithstanding, so much of his ethical teaching depends. In the "Mutter- und Koselieder,"\* in reference to one of the later songs—the "Cuckoo,"—he speaks of awakening the voice of conscience in the child, and of this awakening as "the presentiment of approaching higher spiritual union—union with the Highest." Whether, by this "Highest," he means the right or good, of which we have just been speaking, or whether, by "union with the Highest," he means union with God—a form of thought more familiar to him—is not quite certain.

\* "Mutter- und Koselieder" (Ed. Seidel, Vienna, 1887), p. 203.



Most likely he means the latter. And, indeed, it is probable that, had he been questioned upon this point, he would have said that in the last resort the two principles were one, and that the eternal law of right was identical with the will of God.

Before considering Froebel's treatment of the special virtues, it will be advisable to give our attention for a moment to his views on the subject of the will and its training. Directly he does not tell us very much ; but indirectly he gives us very clear indications of his opinion. We must, in the first place, bear in mind his conviction that the germs of selfishness and the evil will are quickened in the child-mind by the fault of the educator. He tells us that the be-



ginnings of obstinacy "are first awakened in the little child when he discovers that he is left to pain or discomfort through the caprice, inattention or laziness of those who ought to take care of him."\* *His* wilfulness arises in reaction against *our* injustice. This is a valuable psychological observation. There is no doubt that a sense of injustice is very often at the bottom of much of the wilfulness and obstinacy that seem to us inexplicable. The self-will rises in opposition to another will conceived as hostile and unjust. And if in childhood we could be thoroughly imbued with a sense of the absolute justice of those around us, it is highly probable that there

\* "Menschen-Erziehung," p. 16.



would result a feeling of trust and security so perfect that it would—if not wholly prevent—at least to a great extent diminish the growth of obstinacy and selfishness. As regards training of the will, Froebel would, it appears, rely to some extent on physical discipline. In the "*Menschen-Erziehung*" (p. 41) he speaks of measured rhythmic movement as developing a mental attitude favourable to temperance and law. Elsewhere he speaks of the necessity of training the body to be absolutely subject to the will, so that the child may feel his limbs to be a support and protection to his soul, and not a heavy load or burden which his soul is obliged to carry about with it. The will must be trained to be both



*active* and *firm*. For in giving the child freedom, we must awaken his activity of will (*Willensthätigkeit*), and having awakened this, must then gradually lead him on to firmness and decision (*Willensfestigkeit*). The child's will must be trained in self-reliance, so as not to depend helplessly upon the will of another. According to the old system in which obedience was the chief virtue taught to children, the will was not trained, in any rational sense, at all, but was simply crushed. And yet, strangely enough, it was expected that a will, which had all its youthful life been made to lean absolutely upon another, should at the moment of emancipation be instantly capable of standing alone. It has already been pointed out that



on the question of obedience and regard to authority, Froebel's teaching is wanting. But it is not unlikely that, in the natural reaction against a mistaken system, he half wittingly closed his eyes to its good points. His own childhood's training, so far as it ever existed, was so terribly mismanaged, that he conceived as an ideal the greatest possible absence of interference and control. His definition of will, found in the "Menschen-Erziehung" (p. 60), runs as follows:— "Will is that form of spiritual activity (*Geistesthätigkeit*) which, in due correspondence with the whole nature of man, proceeds consciously from a determined source, along a determined path, towards a determined goal;" and he then goes on to say



that the whole duty of the educator lies in seeing (1) that "the source" is strong, healthy and pure ; (2) that "the path " is simple and direct ; and (3) that "the goal " is sure, clearly conceived and worthy of highest effort. Though somewhat hampered here by a rather vague psychology, he evidently means to point out that what we should do in order to create a good will is to look in the first place to the disposition at large, and in the second to the objects to which it is applied. These must not merely be good and worthy in themselves, but also be clearly and adequately recognized. True activity and firmness of will must proceed from true activity and firmness of disposition. Where the latter is wanting the



former will with difficulty be attained. Froebel would, therefore, have us direct all our endeavours to the cultivation of a good heart and disposition (*Herz und Gemüth*).

We pass on to Froebel's treatment of the special virtues. As in all his ethical teaching, so here also he gives us only incidental expressions of his thought, and leaves us to work them out for ourselves. While speaking of the faults of boyhood ("Menschen-Erziehung," p. 75) and vigorously denouncing our own large share in producing them, he lights upon the nature of truth and falsehood. Lying he declares to be the one source of all evil in the world. "If there be anything that is really in itself and essentially evil," he exclaims,



"then it is the lie." That there is any such real evil, however, he will not believe, and he here repeats the theory so often enunciated in different forms by different writers, that falsehood or evil is a shadow only without real existence.\* From this evident horror of lying his love of truth may be inferred. But he hardly speaks at all on the positive side, taking it for granted that men properly educated will be truthful. In his sketch of the "Fundamental Principles of Education" (Lange, vol. i. p. 436) he remarks incidentally that his system of teaching will make men look upon truth as their "chiefest

\* Cp. also Froebel's "*Gesammelte Pädagogische Schriften*," ed. Lange (Berlin, 1862), vol. i. p. 270.



treasure." It is, Froebel tells us, precisely because man is God—created for truth, that he has the power of lying. Otherwise he could not be in the highest sense truthful. The thought is the same as we have met before in relation to goodness in general, and beyond it he tells us but little. On the question how to train the mind to perfect truthfulness, how to guard it from the promptings of cowardice which induce the first false step, he does not enter. Here, again, he might plead that a tendency to untruthfulness is one of the results of a bad education, which under a better and a wiser system would be wholly wanting. It is a lack of confidence that induces cowardice ; the child should live in an atmosphere of



such absolute trust in its parents ("Mutter- und Koselieder," p. 98) that no such failing could arise. The thought here is undeniably beautiful; whether it would work when carried into practice can only be decided by those who have had much experience of children in their various stages of moral development.

On courage he touches several times, regarding it as a natural development of healthy childhood. But he does not clearly distinguish between physical and moral courage. We may, perhaps, say that, in general, he has the former rather than the latter in mind; but he really blends the two together, and it would be impossible to make a hard and fast distinction. The return of the winter,



he tells us,\* brings with it heightened courage and strength, awakening joy in the boy's heart. In the same spirit he speaks of the boy's love of triumphing over difficulties; and even of "creating them for himself for the very sake of overcoming them." We must always bear in mind that Froebel's ideal is a life lived in the open air, in intimate communion with nature under all her aspects and in all her moods. In such a life nature herself would teach the boy courage, endurance and patience, without the necessity of any direct inculcation on the part of his teacher.

To the virtue of justice he scarcely alludes. He might say that a sense of justice would grow up of itself in

\* "Menschen-Erziehung," p. 198.



a child educated in constant companionship with others, and seeing always the same measure dealt out to itself and to its fellows. Even-handed justice would come to form, in its consciousness, part of the necessary relations of things. We must, however, remember that we are here taking for granted, not only that the rulers in the Kindergarten and the school are absolutely just, but also that they are capable of impressing the children with a sense of their justice, and a perfect trust and belief in it. This is an important assumption, and where it is not realized the way is opened to many dangers, *e.g.*, to that obstinacy and self-will the seeds of which, as we have been told, we quicken even in



the infant mind by our own injustice. Given an absolutely honest teacher, the system is admirable, for there cannot be the slightest doubt that a sense of the perfect fairness of those in authority will do more to awaken a love of justice and a desire to act justly among children, than any amount of precept and theoretical teaching. And since, as Froebel is so fond of telling us, the perfect evolution of one stage leads on to the perfect evolution of the next, he who has been in the habit of acting justly as child, boy and youth, will most likely become a lover of justice when a man.

With generosity, the crown of justice, he does not specifically deal. It is, as a matter of fact, not a quality that can be trained. It must come



spontaneously or not at all. His nearest approach to it — though here near is but far—is where he speaks of the natural desire for sympathy (*Gemeingefühl*) inborn in every child. He regards it as a kind of eagerness or yearning to live, not as an isolated unit, but as a living part of a living whole. We see it, he says, even in the infant, whose first smile reveals a yet unconscious yearning towards unity and sympathy with another living being whom it recognizes as not itself. We might surmise that in a later stage this *Gemeingefühl*, having grown into unselfishness, might further rise into generosity, which, after all, is only a higher development of the same fundamental altruistic feeling.



On the old cardinal virtue of temperance, or moderation, Froebel dwells with great enthusiasm, and it is somewhat remarkable that alongside of, and working together with, his strong religious bent he has also a deep reverence for what we may regard as more especially the philosophic or moral, as distinguished from the religious virtues. He gives proof of this in the "*Menschen-Erziehung*" (p. 26), where, after speaking of the necessity of early training in industry and religion, he goes on to say:—

"Human power must neither be merely inwardly expressed as religion and a religious attitude of mind, nor merely outwardly manifested as industry and activity, but



also, thrown back upon itself and self-reliant, it must develop, work and grow perfect, as moderation, temperance and self-control."

He has a few words to say in regard to the performance of duties. They come, he tells us,\* as a joy to the healthy child. "They are not burdens, but in their fulfilment lead finally to the light and to all its generous gifts; hence every healthy child is glad and pleased to fulfil its duties if only they are presented to it clearly, simply, and definitely." Again,—“A sense of duty done calls forth a feeling of independence,” which should be carefully fostered and developed. We see clearly that he anticipates no difficulty or re-

\* “Mutter- und Koselieder,” p. 179.



luctance on the part of the child to obey the behests of duty. He would not have the word made a bugbear, as it so often is, by being held up in opposition to pleasure, as though they were contradictory terms. He would rather have the child approach its duties as pleasures, unconscious of any opposition between obligation and desire.

Throughout Froebel's writings we find no theory of punishment. The view he so strongly held, that the child is in himself good, and that his faults are produced by the mistakes or neglect of his teachers, would necessarily make any theory of retributive punishment impossible for him. But he does not even speak of punishment as preventive. He would have



prevention of another kind. We must, he tells us,\* go to the root of the matter. We must search for and discover the originally good source or side of the human character, in the oppression or misdirection of which the fault in question has had its origin. We must, then, carefully train and direct this till the evil is cured.† Froebel is altogether so much more impressed by the faults of educators than of the educated, that he does not trouble himself to evolve any theory of punishment for the latter. Many so-called faults arise, he tells us, merely from thoughtlessness and carelessness. For instance,

\* "*Menschen-Erziehung*," p. 76.

† Plato also regards wrong-doing as a disease ; but then, he says, it is one which can partially be cured by punishment.



a child, in his zeal for scientific research, keeps on throwing plates from a height into a water-cask full of water until he succeeds in breaking one; or a boy, without the least evil intention, and with a great fondness for pigeons, uses his neighbour's pigeons as a mark till at last he kills one, and leaves her brood of little ones motherless. Without necessarily regarding the child, in consequence, as a *Teufelchen*, or imp of mischief (as he puts it a little further on), it would seem desirable to prevent him from such scarcely innocent exercise of a "praiseworthy impulse" (*lobenswerther Trieb*). Froebel, however, does not seem at all alive to any such necessity. In speaking of crossness and fractiousness in little



children,\* he lights upon a very valuable psychological truth, viz., the power of a sudden change of attention to banish ill-humour. The child, he tells us, is overmastered by its own perversity, and is for the moment *incapable of shaking it off*. A powerful call upon its attention from outside will have the effect of dispelling the cloud, by calling into activity some other power of the mind, and forcing consciousness into another channel.

Turning now to consider Froebel's favourite theory of moral development,† we shall find that it is to some extent coloured by his early studies in physical science. He looks upon

\* "Mutter- und Koseleider," p. 198.

† "Menschen-Erziehung," p. 10.



human character as an organism in process of evolution ; he consequently deems such training to be necessary as shall carefully bring to perfection each step or stage in the process, and, while holding\* clearly in view all the stages to come, shall yet not hurry on any one, or neglect to let each attain its perfect maturity.† Man's course of life,—from the child on its mother's knee to the greybeard nearing the grave,—is that of a constantly progressive, self-developing whole. In the “*Menschen-Erziehung*,” he goes carefully through each stage of development. What is good and even necessary for one

\* See “*Gesamm. -Werke*,” p. 271, ed. Lange. Vol. i.

† See “*Mutter- und Koselieder*,” p. 158.



is harmful for another. The various qualities and powers of mind and disposition must be allowed to unfold freely in their natural course, as the unfolding buds of a plant in blossom. It is no use wanting the flower before the leaves have come out, and it is no use grasping at the fruit before the flower has had time to blossom, fade and fall. Just as the tree wants nourishment, care and shelter, so the character needs food and training,—and if a hostile wind have made it bent or crooked, it wants gentle care and help to make it grow straight again. This analogy of the tree Froebel is very fond of, and he uses it often in various forms. It is in many ways valuable and suggestive ; but some other conclusions to



which it might have led him had he followed it up a little more closely, *e.g.* that all young trees are not in themselves good and strong, but that some bear within them the seeds of premature destruction and decay, do not seem to have occurred to him. Had they been pointed out to him, he would probably have said that in so far the analogy did not hold. He was so thoroughly and unalterably convinced of the original goodness of man, that,—as we cannot help feeling in reading his words of glowing enthusiasm,—no power on earth could have shaken his belief. Doubtless, in a large majority of instances, it may safely be assumed. Of the facts of heredity, which unhappily do to some extent contradict it, we cannot



here speak. Only this much may be said, that, if the pure, strong and noble training which is Froebel's ideal, could be given to mankind at large, so that every human being came under its influence, then, in the course of a generation or two, it is possible that heredity, instead of being, as it now so often is, a terrible curse would, become a source of highest blessing only.

In conclusion, a few words must be said of Froebel's position in regard to happiness. To say that he set a high value upon it is to utter a mere platitude. Even those who most depreciate his teaching, will admit that he has done much to increase the happiness of child-life. His theory was that children should



live in an atmosphere of happiness as in sunshine ; that they should unfold like young plants in the sunlight. This is everywhere his constant wish. But we must carefully note that while he regarded happiness as the most valuable of means, he never looked upon it as an end. He says,\* most emphatically, the child must not be taught that it is to be good *because* it will then be happy. That is a doctrine alike false and pernicious. It is false, because the good are not in fact always happy ; it is pernicious, because to teach a child to follow goodness by reason only of her attendant happiness, is to make him forsake her the moment she seems to bring misery in her train. Instead

\* "Menschen-Erziehung," p. 170.



of being told that if he is good, things will go well with him, he must be shown, "that he who seeks the good, —the pure expression of human life —with willing effort and self-sacrifice, must necessarily live in outward pain and struggle. Each stage of development, however perfect and beautiful in itself, must pass away and be destroyed before the next can appear." Possibly he is here a little led away by his analogy of the plant, which must lose its flowers before it can gain its fruit. For elsewhere he always speaks of each stage of development as growing naturally and almost imperceptibly out of its forerunner. Whatever the cause, we do find here a touch of asceticism which is foreign to the strong, breezy



and thoroughly healthy tone of his whole teaching. His great anxiety, however, in these pages\* is to protest, with all the eloquence of a genuine enthusiasm, against worldliness and other-worldliness. He inveighs strongly against making happiness, either here or hereafter, the price of goodness.

“For if (he exclaims) our course of life be pure, and our actions good and right, there is no need for a reward in another world even though in this one everything to which the mere worldling (*der sinnliche Mensch*) attaches a value should be wanting. . . . It indicates a trivial knowledge of the true nature, and a trivial respect for the true worth and dignity

\* “*Menschen-Erziehung*,” pp. 170-173.



of man, if the stimulus of a reward in another world must be held out in order to rouse him to action worthy of his nature and high calling. . . . The feeling, the consciousness of having lived and worked in unswerving faithfulness to his true nature and dignity ought, without the need or demand of any other external satisfaction, to be at all times his highest reward. . . . We weaken and degrade the human nature we should strengthen and raise, when we dangle before it a bait to good action, even though this bait be hung out from another world. In using an external stimulus, however seemingly spiritual, to call forth a better life, we leave undeveloped that active and independent inward force which is im-



planted within every man for the manifestation of ideal humanity.”

Here we might take leave of Froebel. Ethics can teach us nothing higher than this : without hope of fee or reward, to live and act out always the highest, purest, noblest, human life ; to do the right because it is right, and not because it will bring us happiness, and to follow goodness for its own sake even though it lead us into misery and contempt. From the moralist we can demand no higher teaching. But Froebel himself does not stop here. In his thought ethics and religion are never separated for long ; the highest moral and the highest religious life are indissolubly blended together. For



pervading and illumining the whole body of Froebel's teaching there is the abiding consciousness that—"in God we live, and move, and have our being."

THE END.

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